The STORY of WAITSTILL BAXTER

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

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CHAPTER XVII.

At the Brick Store.

THERE were two grand places for gossip in the community, the old tavern on the Edgewood side of the bridge and the brick store in Riverboro. The company at the Edgewood tavern would be a trifle different in character, more picturesque, imposing and eclectic because of the transient guests that gave it change and variety. Here might be found a judge or a lawyer on his way to court, a sheriff with a handcuffed prisoner, a farmer or two stopping on the road to market with a cartful of produce and an occasional teamster, peddler and stage driver. On winter nights champion story tellers like Jed Morrill and Rish Bixby would drop in there and hang their woolen neck comforters on the pegs along the wall side, where there were already hats, topcoats and fur mufflers, as well as stacks of whips, canes and oxgoads standing in the corners. They would then enter the room, rubbing their hands genially and, nodding to Companion Pike, Cephas Cole, Phil Perry and others, ensconce themselves snugly in the group by the great open fireplace. The landlord was always glad to see them enter, for their stories, though old to him, were new to many of the assembled company and had a remarkable effect on the consumption of liquid refreshment.

On summer evenings gossip was languid in the village, and if any occurred at all it would be on the loafers' bench at one or the other side of the bridge. When cooler weather came the group of local wits gathered in Riverboro, either at Uncle Bart's joiner's shop or at the brick store, according to fancy. The latter place was perhaps the favorite for Riverboro talkers. It was a large, two story, square brick building, with a big mouthed chimney and an open fire. When every house in the two villages had six feet of snow around it roads would always be broken to the brick store, and a crowd of ten or fifteen men would be gathered there talking, listening, betting, smoking, chewing, bragging, playing checkers, singing and "swapping stories."

Some of the men had been through the war of 1812 and could display wounds received on the field of valor, others were still prouder of scars won in encounters with the Indians and there was one old codger, a revolutionary veteran, Bill Dunham by name, who would add bloody tales of his encounters with the "Husshons."

"'Tis an awful sin to have on your soul," Bill would say from his place in a dark corner, where he would sit with his hat pulled over his eyes till the psychological moment came for the "Husshons" to be trotted out. "'Tis an awful sin to have on your soul—the extummination of a race o' men, even if they wa'n't nothin' more'n so many ignorant cockroaches. Them was the great days for fightin'! The Husshons was the biggest men I ever seen on the field, most of 'em standin' six feet eight in their stockin's—but Lord! how we walloped 'em! Once we had a cannon mounted an' loaded for 'em that was so large we had to draw the ball into it with a yoke of oxen!"

Bill paused from force of habit, just as he had paused for the last twenty years. There had been times when roars of incredulous laughter had greeted this boast, but most of this particular group had heard the yarn more than once and let it pass with a smile and a wink, remembering the night that Abel Day had asked old Bill how they got the oxen out of the cannon on that most memorable occasion.

"Oh," said Bill, "that was easy enough. We jest unyoked 'em an' turned 'em out o' the primin' hole!"

It was only early October, but there had been a killing frost, and Ezra Simms, who kept the brick store, flung some shavings and small wood on the hearth and lighted a blaze, just to induce a little trade and start conversation on what threatened to be a dull evening. Peter Morrill, Jed's eldest brother, had lately returned from a

"I remember that funeral well."

long trip through the state and into New Hampshire and his adventures by field and flood were always worth listening to. He went about the country mending clocks and so many an old timepiece still bears his name, with the date of repairing written in pencil on the inside of the door.

There was never any lack of subjects at the brick store, the idiosyncrasies of the neighbors being the most prolific source of anecdote and comment. Whenever all else failed there was always the latest story of Deacon Baxter's parsimony, in which the village traced the influence of heredity.

"He can't hardly help it, inheritin' it on both sides," was Abel Day's opinion. "The Baxters was allers snug from time 'memorial, and Foxy's the snuggest of 'em. When I look at his ugly mug an' hear his snarlin' voice I thinks to myself, he's goin' the same way his father did. When old Levi Baxter was left a widder man in that house o' his'n up river he grew wuss an' wuss, if you remember, till he wa'n't hardly human at the last, and I don't believe Foxy even went up to his own father's funeral."

"'Twould 'n' served old Levi right if nobody else had gone," said Rish Bixby. "When his wife died he refused to come into the house till the last minute. He stayed to work in the barn till all the folks had assembled and even the men were all settin' down on benches in the kitchen. The parson sent me out for him, and I'm blest if the old skunk didn't come in through the crowd with his sleeves rolled up—went to the sink and washed, and then set down in the room where the coffin was, as cool as a cowcumber."

"I remember that funeral well," corroborated Abel Day. "An' Mis' Day heerd Levi say to his daughter, as soon as they'd put poor old Mrs. Baxter int' the grave, 'Come on, Marthy; there's no use cryin' over spilt milk; we'd better go home an' husk out the rest o' that corn.' Old Foxy could have inherited plenty o' meanness from his father, that's certain, an' he's added to his inheritance right along, like the thrifty man he is. I hate to think o' them two fine girls wearin' their fingers to the bone for his benefit."

"Oh, well, 'twon't last forever," said Rish Bixby. "They're the han'somest couple o' girls on the river, an' they'll get husbands afore many years. Patience 'll have one pretty soon, by the looks. She never budges an inch but Mark Wilson or Phil Perry are follerin' behind, with Cephas Cole watchin' his chance right along too. Waitstill don't seem to have no beaux; what with flyin' around to keep up with the deacon an' bein' a mother to Patience, her hands is full, I guess."

"If things was a little mite dif'rent all round I could prognosticate who Waitstill could keep house for," was Peter Morrill's opinion.

"You mean Ivory Boynton? Well, if the deacon was asked he'd never give his consent, that's certain, an' Ivory ain't in no position to keep a wife anyways. What was it you heerd 'bout Aaron Boynton up to New Hampshire, Peter?" asked Abel Day.

"Consid'able, one way an' another, an' none of it would 'a' been any comfort to Ivory. I guess Aaron 'n' Jake Cochrane was both of 'em more interested in savin' the sisters' souls than the brothers'. Aaron was a fine appearin' man, and so was Jake for that matter, 'n' they both had the gift o' gab. There's nothin' like a limber tongue if you want to please the women folks. If report says true, Aaron died of a fever out in Ohio somewheres, Cortland's the place, I b'lieve. Seems 's if he hid his trail all the way from New Hampshire somehow, for as a usual thing a man o' book learnin' like him would be remembered wherever he went. Wouldn't you call Aaron Boynton a turrible l'arned man, Timothy?"

Timothy Grant, the parish clerk, had just entered the store on an errand; but, being directly addressed and judging that the subject under discussion was a discreet one and that it was too early in the evening for drinking to begin, he joined the group by the fireside. He had preached in Vermont for several years as an itinerant Methodist minister before settling down to farming in Edgewood, only giving up his profession because his quiver was so full of little Grants that a wandering life was difficult and undesirable. When Uncle Bart Cole had remarked that Mis' Grant had a little of everything in the way of baby stock now—black, red an' yaller haired, dark and light complected, fat an' lean, tall an' short, twins an' singles—Jed Morrill had observed dryly, "Yes, Mis' Grant kind o' reminds me of charity."

"How's that?" inquired Uncle Bart.

"She beareth all things," chuckled Jed.

"Aaron Boyton was indeed a man of most adhesive larnin'," agreed Timothy, who had the reputation of the largest and most unusual vocabulary in Edgewood. "Next to Jacob Cochrane I should say Aaron had more grandeloquence as an orator than any man we've ever had in these parts. It don't seem 's if Ivory was goin' to take after his father that way. The little feller, now, is smart 's a whip an' could talk the tail off a brass monkey."

"Yes, but Rodman ain't no kin to the Boyntons," Abel reminded him. "He inhails from the other side o' the house."

"That's so. Well, Ivory does for certain, an' takes after his mother, right enough, for she hain't spoken a dozen words in as many years, I guess. Ivory's got a sight o' book knowledge, though, an' they do say he could talk Greek an' Latin both, if we had any of 'em in the community to converse with. I've never paid no intention to the dead languages, bein' so ockerpied with other studies."

"Why do they call 'em the dead languages, Tim?" asked Rish Bixby.

"Because all them that ever spoke 'em has perished off the face o' the land," Timothy answered oracularly. "Dead an' gone they be, lock, stock and barrel; yet there was a time when Latins an' Crustaceans an' Hebrews an' Prooshians an' Australians an' Simesians was chatterin' away in their own tongues, an' so pow'ful that they was wallopin' the whole earth, you might say."

"I bet yer they never tried to wallop these here United States," interpolated Bill Dunham from the dark corner by the molasses hogshead.

"Is Ivory in here?" The door opened and Rodman Boynton appeared on the threshold.

"No, sonny, Ivory ain't been in this evenin'," replied Ezra Simms. "I hope there ain't nothin' the matter over to your house?"

"No, nothing particular," the boy answered, "only Aunt Boynton don't seem so well as common, and I can't find Ivory anywhere."

"Come along with me, I'll help you look for him, an' then I'll go as fur as the lane with yer if we don't find him." And kindly Rish Bixby took the boy's hand and left the store.

"Mis' Boynton's had a spell, I guess!" suggested the storekeeper, peering through the door into the darkness. "'Tain't like Ivory to be out nights and leave her to Rod."

"She don't have no spells," said Abel Day. "Uncle Bart sees consid'able of Ivory, an' he says his mother is as quiet as a lamb. Couldn't you git no kind of a certif'cate of Aaron's death out o' that Enfield feller, Peter? Seems 's if that poor woman oughter be stopped watchin' for a dead man; tuckerin' herself all out an' keepin' Ivory an' the boy all nerved up."

"I've told Ivory everything I could gather up in the way of information and give him the names of the folks in Ohio that had writ back to New Hampshire. I didn't dilate on Aaron's goin's on in Effingham and Portsmouth, 'cause I dassay 'twas nothin' but scandal. Them as hates the Cochranites'll never allow there's any good in 'em, whereas I've met some as is servin' the Lord good an' constant an' indulgin' in no kind of foolishness an' devilry whatsoever."

"Speakin' o' Husshons," said Bill Dunham from his corner, "I remember"—

"We wa'n't alludin' to no Husshons," retorted Timothy Grant. "We was dealin' with the misfortunes of Aaron Boynton, who never fit valorously on the field o' battle, but perished out in Ohio of scarlit fever, if what they say in Enfield is true."

"'Tis an easy death," remarked Bill argumentatively. "Scarlit fever don't seem like nothin' to me! Many's the time I've been close enough to fire at the eyeball of a Husshon an' run the resk o' bein' blown to smithereens!—calm and cool I allers was too! Scarlit fever is an easy death from a warrior's p'int o' view!"

"Speakin' of easy death," continued Timothy, "you know I'm a great one for words, bein' something of a scholard in my small way. Mebbe you noticed that Elder Boone used a strange word in his sermon last Sunday? Words air cur'ous things sometimes, as I know, bevin' had consid'able leisure time to read when I was joggin' 'bout the country an' bein' brought into contack with men o' learnin'. The way I worked it out, not wishin' to ask Parson any more questions, bein' something of a scholard myself, is this: The youth in Ashy is a peculiar kind o' youth, 'n' their religion disposes 'em to lay no kind o' stress on huming life. When anything goes wrong with 'em an' they get a set back in war or business, or affairs with women folks, they want to die right off, so they take a sword an' stan' it straight up wherever they happen to be, in the shed or the barn or the henhouse, an' they p'int the sharp end right to their waist line, where the bowels an' other vital organisms is lowcated, an' then they fall on to it. It runs 'em right through to the back an' kills 'em like a shot, and that's the way I cal'late the youth in Ashy dies, if my entomology is correct, as it gen'ally is."

"Don't seem an easy death to me," argued Ezra, "but I ain't no scholard. What college did you attend to, Tim?"

"I don't hold no diaploma," responded Timothy, "though I attended the Wareham academy quite a spell, the same time as your sister was goin' to Wareham seminary where eddication is still bein' disseminated though of an awful poor kind compared to the old times."

"It's live an' larn," said the storekeeper respectfully. "I never thought of a seminary bein' a place of dissemination before, but you can see the two words is near kin."

"You can't allers tell by the sound," said Timothy instructively. "Sometimes two words 'll start from the same root an' branch out diff'rent, like 'critter' an' 'hypocritter.' A 'hypocritter' must natcherally start by bein' a 'critter,' but a critter ain't obliged to be a 'hypocritter' 'thout he wants to."

"I should hope not," interpolated Abel Day piously. "Entomology must be an awful interestin' study, though I never thought of observin' words myself, 'cept to avoid vulgar language an' profanity."

"Husshon's a cur'ous word for a man," interjected Bill Dunham with a last despairing effort. "I remember seein' a Husshon once that"—

"Perhaps you ain't one to observe closely, Abel," said Timothy, not taking note of any interruption, simply using the time to direct a stream of tobacco juice to an incredible distance, but landing it neatly in the exact spot he had intended. "It's a trade by itself, you might say, observin' is, an' there's another sing'lar corruption! The Whigs in foreign parts, so they say, build stone towers to observe the evil machinations of the Tories, an' so the word 'observatory' come into general use! All entomology; nothin' but entomology."

"I don't see where in thunder you picked up so much larnin', Timothy!" It was Abel Day's exclamation, but every one agreed with him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Rod That Blossomed.

IVORY BOYNTON had taken the horse and gone to the village on an errand, a rare thing for him to do after dark, so Rod was thinking as he sat in the living room learning his Sunday school lesson on the same evening that the men were gossiping at the brick store. His aunt had required him from the time when he was proficient enough to do so to read at least a part of a chapter in the Bible every night. Beginning with Genesis, he had reached Leviticus and had made up his mind that the Bible was a much more difficult book than "Scottish Chiefs" notwithstanding the fact that Ivory helped him over most of the hard places. At the present juncture he was vastly interested in the subject of "rods" as unfolded in the book of Exodus, which was being studied by his Sunday school class. What added to the excitement was the fact that his uncle's Christian name, Aaron, kept appearing in the chronicle as frequently as that of the great lawgiver Moses himself, and there were many verses about the wonder working rods of Moses and Aaron that had a strange effect upon the boy's ear when he read them aloud, as he loved to do whenever he was left alone for a time. When his aunt was in the room his instinct kept him from doing this, for the mere mention of the name of Aaron, he feared, might sadden his aunt and provoke in her that dangerous vein of reminiscence that made Ivory so anxious.

"It kind o' makes me nervous to be named Rod, Aunt Boynton," said the boy, looking up from the Bible. "All the rods in these Exodus chapters do such dreadful things! They become serpents, and one of them swallows up all the others, and Moses smites the waters with a rod, and they become blood, and the people can't drink the water and the fish die! Then they stretch a rod across the streams and ponds and bring a plague of frogs over the land, with swarms of flies and horrible insects."

"That was to show God's power to Pharaoh and melt his hard heart to obedience and reverence," explained Mrs. Boynton, who had known the Bible from cover to cover in her youth and could still give chapter and verse for hundreds of her favorite passages.

"It took an awful lot of melting, Pharaoh's heart!" exclaimed the boy. "Pharaoh must have been worse than Deacon Baxter! I wonder if they ever tried to make him good by being kind to him! I've read and read, but I can't find they used anything on him but plagues and famines and boils and pestilences and thunder and hail and fire! Have I got a middle name, Aunt Boynton, for I don't like Rod very much?"

"I never heard that you had a middle name; you must ask Ivory," said his aunt abstractedly.

"Did my father name me Rod, or my mother?"

"I don't really know. Perhaps it was your mother, but don't ask questions, please."

"I forgot, Aunt Boynton! Yes, I think perhaps my mother named me. Mothers 'most always name their babies, don't they? My mother wasn't like you, she looked just like the picture of Pocahontas in my history. She never knew about these Bible rods, I guess."

"When you go a little further you will find pleasanter things about rods," said his aunt, knitting, knitting intensely, as was her habit, and talking as if her mind were 1,000 miles away. "You know they were just little branches of trees, and it was only God's power that made them wonderful in any way."

"Oh! I thought they were like the singing teacher's stick he keeps time with."

"No; if you look at your concordance you'll find it gives you a chapter in Numbers where there's something beautiful about rods. I have forgotten the place. It has been many years since I looked at it. Find it and read it aloud to me." The boy searched his concordance and readily found the reference in the 17th chapter of Numbers.

"Stand near me and read," said Mrs. Boynton. "I like to hear the Bible read aloud!"

Rodman took his Bible and read, slowly and haltingly, but with clearness and understanding:

"1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

"2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod."

Through the boy's mind there darted the flash of a thought, a sad thought. He himself was a Rod on whom no man's name seemed to be written, orphan that he was, with no knowledge of his parents!

Suddenly he hesitated, for he had caught sight of the name of Aaron in the verse that he was about to read and did not wish to pronounce it in his aunt's hearing.

"This chapter is most too hard for me to read out loud, Aunt Boynton," he stammered. "Can I study it by myself and read it to Ivory first?"

"Go on, go on, you read very sweetly. I cannot remember what comes and I wish to hear it."

The boy continued, but without raising his eyes from the Bible:

"3. And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.

"4. And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you.

"5. And it shall come to pass that the man's rod, whom I shall choose,

Rodman Took His Bible and Read.

shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you."

Rodman had read on, absorbed in the story and the picture it presented to his imagination. He liked the idea of all the princes having a rod according to the house of their fathers. He liked to think of the little branches being laid on the altar in the tabernacle, and above all he thought of the longing of each of the princes to have his own rod chosen for the blossoming.

"6. And Moses spoke unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their father's houses, even twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods."

Oh! how the boy hoped that Aaron's branch would be the one chosen to blossom! He felt that his aunt would be pleased, too, but he read on steadily, with eyes that glowed and breath that came and went in a very palpitation of interest:

"7. And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.

"8. And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron was budded and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."

It was Aaron's rod, then, and was an almond branch! How beautiful, for the blossoms would have been pink: and how the people must have marvelled to see the lovely blooming thing on the dark altar, first budding, then blossoming, then bearing nuts! And what was the rod chosen for? He hurried on to the next verse:

"9. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.

"10. And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not."

"Oh, Aunt Boynton," cried the boy, "I love my name after I've heard about the almond rod! Aren't you proud that it's uncle's name that was written on the one that blossomed?"

He turned swiftly to find that his aunt's knitting had slipped on the floor; her nerveless hands drooped by her side as if there were no life in them, and her head had fallen against the back of her chair. The boy was paralyzed with fear at the sight of her closed eyes and the deathly pallor of her face. He had never seen her like this before, and Ivory was away. He flew for a bottle of spirit, always kept in the kitchen cupboard for emergencies, and throwing wood on the fire in passing, he swung the crane so that the tea kettle was over the flame. He knew only the humble remedies that he had seen used here or there in illness and tried them timidly, praying every moment that he might hear Ivory's step. He warmed a soapstone in the embers and, taking off Mrs. Boynton's shoes, put it under her cold feet. He chafed her hands and gently poured a spoonful of brandy between her pale lips. Then, sprinkling camphor on a handkerchief, he held it to her nostrils, and to his joy she stirred in her chair; before many minutes her lids fluttered, her lips moved, and she put her hand to her heart.

"Are you better, aunt dear?" Rod asked in a very wavering and tearful voice.

She did not answer; she only opened her eyes and looked at him. At length she whispered faintly, "I want Ivory; I want my son."

"He's out, aunt dear. Shall I help you to bed the way Ivory does? If you'll let me, then I'll run to the bridge 'cross lots like lightning and bring him back."

She assented and, leaning heavily on his slender shoulder, walked feebly into her bedroom off the living room. Rod was as gentle as a mother, and he was familiar with all the little offices that could be of any comfort—the soapstone warmed again for her feet, the bringing of her nightgown from the closet and when she was in bed another spoonful of brandy in hot milk; then the camphor by her side, an extra homespun blanket over her and the door left open so that she could see the open fire that he made into a cheerful huddle, contrived so that it would not snap and throw out dangerous sparks in his absence.

All the while he was doing this Mrs. Boynton lay quietly in the bed talking to herself fitfully in the faint murmuring tone that was habitual to her. He could distinguish scarcely anything, only enough to guess that her mind was still on the Bible story that he was reading to her when she fainted. "The rod of Aaron was among the other rods," he heard her say, and a moment later, "Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony."

Was it his uncle's name that had so affected her? wondered the boy, almost sick with remorse, although he had tried his best to evade her command to read the chapter aloud. What would Ivory, his hero, his pattern and example, say? It had always been Rod's pride to carry his little share of every burden that fell to Ivory, to be faithful and helpful in every task given to him. He could walk through fire without flinching, he thought, if Ivory told him to, and he only prayed that he might not be held responsible for this new calamity.

"I want Ivory!" came in a feeble voice from the bedroom.

"Does your side ache worse?" Rod asked, tiptoeing to the door.

"No. I am quite free from pain."

"Would you be afraid to stay alone just for awhile if I lock both doors and run to find Ivory and bring him back?"

"No. I will sleep," she whispered, closing her eyes. "Bring him quickly before I forget what I want to say to him."

Rod sped down the lane and over the fields to the brick store where Ivory usually bought his groceries. His cousin was not there, but one of the men came out and offered to take his horse and drive over the bridge to see if he were at one of the neighbors on that side of the river. Not a word did Rod breathe of his aunt's illness; he simply said that she was lonesome for Ivory, and so he came to find him. In five minutes they saw the Boyntons horse hitched to a tree by the roadside and in a trice Rod called him and, thanking Mr. Bixby, got into Ivory's wagon to wait for him. He tried his best to explain the situation as they drove along, but finally concluded by saying: "Aunt really made me read the chapter to her, Ivory. I tried not to when I saw uncle's name in most every verse, but I couldn't help it."

"Of course you couldn't! Now you jump out and hitch the horse while I run in and see that nothing has happened while she's been left alone. Perhaps you'll have to go for Dr. Perry."

Ivory went in with fear and trembling, for there was no sound save the ticking of the tall clock. The fire burned low upon the hearth, and the door was open into his mother's room. He lifted a candle that Rod had left ready on the table and stole softly to her bedside. She was sleeping like a child, but exhaustion showed itself in every line of her face. He felt her hands and feet and found the soapstone in the bed, saw the brandy bottle and the remains of a cup of milk on the light stand, noted the handkerchief, still strong of camphor, on the counterpane and the blanket spread carefully over her knees, and then turned approvingly to meet Rod stealing into the room on tiptoe, his eyes big with fear.

"We won't wake her, Rod. I'll watch awhile, then sleep on the sitting room lounge."

"Let me watch, Ivory! I'd feel better if you'd let me, honest I would!"

The boy's face was drawn with anxiety. Ivory's attention was attracted by the wistful eyes and the beauty of the forehead under the dark hair. He seemed something more than the child of yesterday—a care and responsibility and expense for all his loving obedience; he seemed all at once different tonight—older, more dependable, more trustworthy—in fact, a positive comfort and help in time of trouble.

"I did the best I knew how. Was anything wrong?" asked the boy, as Ivory stood regarding him with a friendly smile.

"Nothing wrong, Rod! Dr. Perry couldn't have done any better with what you had on hand. I don't know how I should get along without you, boy!" Here Ivory patted Rod's shoulder. "You're not a child any longer, Rod; you're a man and a brother, that's what you are, and to prove it I'll take the first watch and call you up at 1 o'clock to take the second so that I can be ready for my school work tomorrow. How does that suit you?"

"Tiptop!" said the boy, flushing with pride. "I'll lie down with my clothes on; it's only 9 o'clock and I'll get four hours' sleep; that's a lot more than Napoleon used to have."

He carried the Bible upstairs and just before he blew out his candle he looked again at the chapter in Numbers, thinking he would show it to Ivory, privately next day. Again the story enchanted him, and again, like a child, he puts his own name and his living self among the rods in the tabernacle.

"Ivory would be the prince of our house," he thought. "Oh, how I'd like to be Ivory's rod and have it be the one that was chosen to blossom and keep the rebels from murmuring!"

(To be Continued Next Wednesday.)

Woman's Advantage.

It's easy for a woman to clean up. She can rub a little powder on her nose and cheeks, but a man has to take off his collar and necktie and wash.—Detroit Free Press.